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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3385
INFO RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 0988
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1124
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0074
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1227
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY 2505
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1615
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0985

UNCLAS NDJAMENA 000441

SIPDIS

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SENSITIVE

PARIS AND LONDON FOR AFRICAWATCHERS

DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/AF AND AF/C

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED SIPDIS CAPTION AND PASS TO LINE)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: CORRECTION: CHAD: ALTERCATION NEAR PALACE SPARKS RUMORS

¶1. (U) On March 22, at approximately 10:30 a.m. N'djamena time, a disgruntled deminer apparently threatened the Chadian coordinator of the High Commission for Demining (French acronym HCND) with a pistol. Shots were reported fired. The dispute may have been over salaries. The authorities were alerted, and the police detained the individual. However, due to proximity with the Presidential Palace (next door), the Presidential Guard entered the HCND compound and searched all HCND staff and offices. According to a Swiss UNDP-funded demining expert who was present at the time, the Guard briefly seized HCND's explosives (they were later returned).

¶2. (U) Meanwhile, the combination of reports of guns and sight of police forces in close proximity to the Presidential Palace had sent rumours flying across the city that the Presidential Palace was under attack. The Embassy received reports that shops were shutting down, crowds were gathering on major roads and that there was unusually heavy traffic on the bridge to Cameroon. Embassy guards witnessed people running by the Embassy away from the Presidential Palace. The A/RSO instructed the Marines to send out a call on the Embassy radio net to all Amcits to stand fast. The Marines took up internal defense positions. The Consular Officer sent text messages to the Embassy Wardens.

¶3. (U) By approximately 11:45 a.m. N'djamena time the roads were cleared and traffic was back to normal. Mission received word that the incident was localized and over. Amcits were given an all clear sign. The Embassy Emergency Action Committee (EAC) met at 4 p.m. to review post's security posture and agreed that the current posture was correct.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: While the incident itself was fairly innocuous, the panicked reactions by N'djamena citizens is a good indicator of the tensions in the city at this time. Most N'djamenoise are convinced that it's not if, but when, an attack on the President's Palace will take place.

WALL